
About Ureteral Stents: Information for Patient and Families



An agency of the Provincial
Health Services Authority

4480 Oak Street, Vancouver BC, V6H 3V4

604-875-2345

1-888-300-3088

www.bcchildrens.ca

What are ureteral stents?

The ureter is the tube that carries urine (pee) from the kidneys to the bladder. A ureteral stent is a hollow, soft, plastic tube that helps urine flow out of the kidney.

Ureteral stents are used when:

1. There is a blockage in the ureter at the site where it connects to the kidney. When this occurs, urine cannot flow normally from the kidney and the bladder. This may cause the kidney to inflate. Surgery is needed to unblock the ureter.
2. The ureter is not connected to the bladder in the usual place. This may cause urine to flow back into the kidney, causing damage to the kidney. Surgery is needed to fix the connection between the ureter and the bladder.

Once the blockage has been removed or the connection has been fixed, a ureteral stent is inserted in the ureter to help urine flow normally. There are two types of ureteral stents:

1. **Internal stent:** placed inside the body, the internal stent connects the kidney to the bladder. It helps urine flow from the kidney to the bladder.
2. **External stent:** enters the body through a small cut (incision) in the skin, the external stent moves from the kidney, down the ureter, to the bladder. It helps urine flow to a drainage bag (a bag that collects urine) located outside of the body.

The part of the stent located outside the body needs to be held tightly to the skin by a dressing (bandage). Your child's nurse will give you some dressing supplies for when you go home.

Ureteral stents allow the area repaired during surgery to heal. Once healed, the ureteral stent will be removed.

What can we expect after surgery?

After surgery to repair the ureter, your child may experience some mild discomfort, such as:

- Bladder spasms or the feeling of needing to pee
- A burning feeling while peeing
- Pain in his/her back or side while peeing or moving
- Blood in his/her urine

These symptoms may continue until your child is healed and the ureteral stents are removed.

To help ease the pain and discomfort, your child may be given the following medicines:

- Oxybutnin (e.g. Ditropan) to stop bladder spasms
- Ibuprofen (e.g. Advil) or acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) for any other pain or discomfort

To prevent infection caused by bacteria (germ), your child's surgeon may also give him or her antibiotics. Please make sure your child takes the antibiotics exactly as directed by his or her surgeon.

How do I care for my child?

Here are some instructions on how to care for your child while the stent is in place:

1. Dressing:

For the external stent, a dressing (bandage) will be placed over the small cut to hold the stent in place. Change the dressing when it gets wet, is dirty, or smelly.

2. Bathing:

If your child has an internal stent, he or she can shower or bathe as usual. If your child has an external stent, a shallow bath is recommended. Please make sure to keep the dressing dry. If it becomes wet, change the dressing.

3. Activity:

It is important that your child avoid sports or contact games for 6 weeks after surgery. If your child has an internal stent, he or she may go swimming 2 weeks after surgery. If your child has an external stent, he or she cannot go swimming until the stent is taken out.

When are ureteral stents removed?

Internal Stent:

The Urology Clinic secretary will give your child an appointment 6 to 8 weeks after surgery to have his or her internal stent removed. On the date of the appointment, your child will go to the operating

room. Here, your child will be given anesthetic (sleep medicine) so that he or she will not feel the internal stent being removed.



For more information on how to prepare you and your child for surgery, please see the BC Children's Hospital Online Surgery Tour at:
www.bcchildrens.ca/surgerytour

External Stents

The Urology Clinic secretary will give your child an appointment 2 to 3 weeks after surgery to have his or her external stent removed. The nurse will remove the stent in the Urology Clinic. This procedure usually takes 1 to 2 minutes and does not require anesthetic.

You may give your child some pain medicine, such as ibuprofen (e.g. Advil) or acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol), 30 minutes before the stent removal.

When do we follow-up with the Urology Clinic?

Once the ureteral stents are removed, your child will follow up with his or her Urologist in the Urology Clinic at BC Children's Hospital. This appointment will take place 3 months after the ureteral stent has been removed.

To book your child's follow-up appointment, call the Urology clinic at: 604-875-2734.



Who Do I Call in Case of Emergency?

During regular hours, you may call the Urology Nurse at 604-875-2889 if you have any questions or concerns.



After regular hours, please come to BC Children's Hospital Emergency Department if your child's is experiencing the following:

- Bright red blood in urine (light pink is to be expected)
- Pain that is not controlled with ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting
- Inability to pee
- Fever (38.5 degrees Celsius or 100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Urine leakage from incision site or the stent's drain site (location where the stent drains urine into the drainage bag)
- The external stent is pulled out.

Developed by the health professionals of the Urology Clinic with assistance from Learning & Development Department